



CHALLENGING INEQUALITY  
& CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

# Fair for All Programme

Annual Report to April 2009



## **Further information and alternative formats**

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## Foreword

It has been another busy year, particularly because we put our work on equality 'under the spotlight' of the Equality Standard Peer Challenge Process.

I was very pleased to see the Council confirmed at Level 3 of the Standard in the Autumn. A lot of people helped us through the Peer Challenge Process including staff, Members and external stakeholders who all got involved in the focus groups. I would like to thank the 'equality team' from across the Council who worked on pulling together evidence and co-ordinating the assessment – Simon Kitchen, Jo Hooper, Natasha Cole, Christine Davis, Debbie Fox, Debbie Pritchard, Jay Hooper, Julie Richards and Paul Giblin, the Peer Challenge Team – Kal Parkash from Shropshire Council, Nick Stephenson from Swindon Council and Councillor David Billing from Hertfordshire Council. We were also supported by the South West Regional Improvement and Efficiency Programme and owe particular thanks to consultant Rajwant Bains for the Mock Assessment which helped us identify strengths and areas for improvement and check that we were ready for the full assessment.

I was also proud to see the nominees and winners of the Customer Service and Equality Awards in March 2009. Whilst we still have a lot to do, we cannot ignore the hard work and dedication from our staff and partners who are making a difference for people in Devon. This year we saw the new Clear Communications award which came out of the Plain English and Easy Read project. Plain English was identified as a high priority in the Council's Equality Scheme (Fair for All Programme).

I Chair the Equality Strategy Group, and the group continues to steer our equality work. We are now moving towards becoming more focussed on outcomes and being able to evidence improvements within and between communities.

We value the close working relationship we have with the voluntary and community sector – in particular, our Equality Reference Group who keep us on our toes!

Thanks again to everyone who has made a difference,

**Councillor Brenda Taylor**  
**Member Equality Champion to May 2009**

One aspiration for Devon's Fair for All Programme is that there will be public influence over decision making, planning, policy and service delivery, and a "loud minority voice". The Equality Reference Group exists to ensure that the voices of our "minorities" are heard loudly and clearly by Devon County Council.

Within our group our expertise covers the fields of older people, young people, lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans, gender, disability and race/ethnicity. Our role within the wider Equality Strategy Group is that of critical friend. We are invited to consider specific issues that are brought to us for scrutiny and discussion and to raise particular concerns of our own. In our Equality Reference Group pre-meetings we also have the space and freedom to meet without council representation and this enables us to define our own agendas and to gain a wider insight into all of the equality strands.

Despite our excellent relationship with Devon County Council staff we cannot take credit for the council's recent excellent achievements which include the award of the Level 3 Equality Standard.

We also attended the Customer Service and Equality Awards and were very pleased to be invited to an internal event to celebrate and recognise the commitment of individual members of staff.

We look forward to continuing this valuable and productive relationship and to working together towards equality and fairness for all.

### **Equality Reference Group (External Stakeholders)**

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## Executive Summary

Through our Equality Policy and Fair for All Programme we want to make sure we operate in a non-discriminatory and inclusive way. Our Fair for All Programme has been aligned to the following desired outcomes – *Our Vision of Equality and Fairness*:

- **People achieve their own potential and a good quality of life.**
- **Everyone can use or access our services, facilities or information.** Different needs are always taken into account.
- **There is public influence over decision making, planning, policy and service delivery.** There is wide and fair representation and ‘loud minority voice’. People feel involved and influential – forums for participating are supported in a sustainable way and have real impact. Diversity is reflected in governance arrangements. No community is considered ‘hard to reach’. There is a strong understanding of the diverse range of needs in Devon’s communities, their make up and changing nature.
- **Devon is a stronger, safer and inclusive community.** There are good relations between different communities. People are treated with dignity and respect at work, as a customer, and in the community.
- **People have trust and confidence in us** to report incidents or abuse or discrimination and are happy with the process when they do.
- **Across all levels, our workforce is supported and reflects the community.** There is fair pay and employment practice, equal opportunities to progress and develop, and access to flexible working and ‘family friendly’ arrangements.

This Annual Report describes work carried out between April 2008 and March 2009. During that time we also had two external assessments on equality, one through the Equality Standard Peer Challenge, the other from the Audit Commission. We were confirmed at having reached Level 3 of the Equality Standard, now Achieving level of the new Equality Framework.

Not surprisingly, lots of effort went in to this as well as delivering key objectives, but we still managed to complete 25 of our objectives/targets within the first year of the Fair for All Programme, and a further 16 have been started and are ‘in progress’.

We continue to work in partnership with the voluntary and community sector, largely through the Equality Reference Group which sits on our Equality Strategy Group.

Leadership is important and in November 2008 members of the Devon Strategic Partnership signed a Joint Declaration for Equality.

Engaging communities through International Women’s Day and LGBT History Month Pride, and recognising staff achievements through the Equality and Customer Service Awards were important events in the year.

Improving how we communicate with people has been a key priority with initiatives such as the Plain English and Easy Read Project, and supporting the development of local interpreting agencies Multilingua (aural language interpreting) and Deafinite (Sign Language interpreting), publishing a Translation and Interpreting Policy, supporting the Devon BSL Charter and running a dedicated Disability Information Service.

We continue to deliver services that are tailored to meet the needs of Devon's communities including:

A range of initiatives to help people get around such as Independent Travel Training, Devon Access Wallet and ensuring more accessible buses. Access to the countryside has also improved along with better information about accessibility.

The library service continues to improve its range of materials and initiatives including an event for BME children, Bookstart packs for Traveller children and children with visual and hearing impairments, spoken word books on MP3, LGBT resources promoted and books on prescription for people with mild-moderate mental health problems. The Devon Records Office has created a Sensory Box so that children with visual impairments can explore historical records.

Social Care projects continue to grow and meet the specific needs of BME elders.

Community engagement activities include the Devon Learning Disability Parliament Project, Take Part Pathfinder, Excellence not Excuses and a Staff Survey.

The workforce has been supported with improved flexible working arrangements and we continue to support young people through the Apprenticeship Programme.

We hope you find this report interesting. If you would like any more information please visit our equality and diversity web-pages at [www.devon.gov.uk/diversity](http://www.devon.gov.uk/diversity) where you will find a wealth of information, or contact us.

**Jo Hooper**

**Corporate Equality Officer**

## Notice of Amendments to the Fair for All Programme 2008-11

### Page

- 7 The Equality Standard was replaced by the Equality Framework in April 2009.
- 9 The Council achieved Level 3 of the Equality Standard in October 2008.
- 9 Comprehensive Performance Assessment has been replaced by Comprehensive Area Assessment in 2009.
- 12 Personnel and Performance Directorate and Finance, IT and Trading Directorate have merged to form the Corporate Resources Directorate.  
Heather Barnes is now the Executive Director for Corporate Resources.
- 13 The Equality Reference Group member for Disability issues is now from the Fusion Partnership (a partnership with Living Options Devon – physical and sensory disability, Carers and Learning Disability networks. Mental Health links are being established).  
The Equality Reference Group member for Gender equality is now from Devon Fawcett.  
The Equality Reference Group member for older people represents Devon Senior Council.
- 16 The Council was assessed for Level 3 of the Equality Standard through the Peer Challenge Process (organised by the I&DeA). Members of the Equality Reference Group were interviewed as part of that process.
- 16 The Refusal of Service Policy has been replaced by the Unacceptable Customer Behaviour Policy.
- 19 From May 2009 a new equality training programme will be in place.
- 19 Resources and information are now available from:  
[www.devon.gov.uk/devonforeveryone](http://www.devon.gov.uk/devonforeveryone)
- 22 The Gender Group no longer meets because Devon Fawcett now operates.
- 22 The Disability Equality Scheme Steering Group no longer meets because the project

has come to an end.

26 – 41 ECSC for Personnel and Performance and ECSC for Finance, IT and Trading is now the ECSC\* for Corporate Resources.

\*Equality and Customer Service Champions.

Objectives relating to the Reputations Programme Manager & Feedback Development Officer will now be the responsibility of the Customer Service Policy Officer.

### **New objectives**

The following objectives will be added to the Fair for All Programme from April 2009:

- Improve ICT support for disabled staff.
- Improve quality of Equality Impact and Needs Assessment.
- Develop Discriminatory Incident Reporting facility as part of the Complaints System.

## Progress and Achievements

### *Equality Standard for Local Government*

In the Autumn we were pleased to announce that we achieved Level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local Government.

The authority was the third county council, alongside Kent and Gloucestershire, to undertake the new, external validation through a rigorous Peer Challenge assessment in October.

The Peer Challenge Process was set up by the I&DeA (Improvement and Development Agency) to ensure a consistent and robust assessment. It was not an inspection but offered an external assessment by critical friends, who have experience of delivering an equality/diversity agenda in their own authorities, and of the council's own judgement of itself against the Equality Standard benchmark.

Assessors checked that we had:

- Sound leadership, policies, structures and commitment to drive the agenda.
- Engaged in equality impact and needs assessment and set objectives and targets for equality at service level and in employment.
- Worked in partnership and had embedded equality in the Local Area Agreement.

A number of strengths were highlighted and also areas for improvement to help us sustain our work on equality and achieve outcomes for communities.

The Equality Standard has now changed to the Equality Framework for Local Government and the Council has been migrated across to the new level, Achieving.



“There has been an improvement within DCC staff in general awareness in equality, whether it be through training or awareness of the successful level 3 assessment.”

Ben Jones, Young Person's Representative, Equality Reference Group.

## ***Audit Commission Feedback***

In their Annual Audit and Inspection Letter March 2009, the Audit Commission writes:

### **Overall conclusion**

The Council is making good progress in improving its corporate approach to equalities and diversity. It is showing a strong trend of improvement supported by good leadership and high calibre staff involved in equalities work. It has recently achieved level three of the equality standard following rigorous self assessment and peer review. Policies and processes are comprehensive but the Council is not yet able to evidence improvements for residents across all equality strands and across all services. Equality impact assessments are developing but are not yet of a consistently high quality. There are numerous examples of good partnership working leading to improved quality of life for residents who are in a minority or who have physical or sensory impairments and the Council demonstrates good leadership. There are good examples of community engagement but this is not always co-ordinated across the Council and with partners. The Council does not receive and act on enough real time ongoing systematic feedback from customers to improve services. The quality and reliability of data is limiting the effectiveness of managing performance in some areas of equalities. Good initiatives are promoting community cohesion and the Council is working on bringing these together to provide a more strategic approach.

### **Community cohesion**



The Council has a range of initiatives which support communities in getting on well together. For example, the Council works well with gypsies and travellers, parish councils and other agencies to improve understanding between settled and traveller communities. The Council works with other agencies to improve understanding of issues facing new migrant communities and provide appropriate services for them. This includes significant pieces of research and provision of services such as welcome packs to ensure migrant workers can access the services they need. The youth parliament and the senior council help to improve inter generational understanding.

## Corporate Equality Policy and Scheme – Progress Overview

The Council's revised Equality Policy and Fair for All Programme were approved by Corporate Management Board in May 2008 and by Council Executive on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2008.

### Progress with meeting Fair for All objectives for the year 2008-9 (position at April 2009):

	<b>Objective/Action</b>
% completed/on or above target 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Plain English and Easy Read project phase 1.</li> <li>2. BSL Interpreter agency contract in place.</li> <li>3. Translation and Interpreting policy in place.</li> <li>4. Customer diversity monitoring guidance in place.</li> <li>5. Consultation guidance (engaging with equality groups) in place.</li> <li>6. Transgender guidance (for manager/staff) in place.</li> <li>7. Equality Impact and Needs Assessment programmes for 2008-11 published.</li> <li>8. Revised Equality Impact and Needs Assessment toolkit published.</li> <li>9. Revised Equality Policy published.</li> <li>10. Council-wide multi-ethnic forum (which involves staff) in place.</li> <li>11. Improving links with the LGBT staff network.</li> <li>12. Reference group in place for addressing racism, homophobia and other harassment towards children and young people.</li> <li>13. Revised flexitime policy in place.</li> <li>14. Level 3 of the Equality Standard achieved.</li> <li>15. Recycling facilities review complete (accessibility).</li> <li>16. All pedestrian crossings DDA compliant.</li> <li>17. Revised equality training programme delivered.</li> <li>18. Annual target for DDA buildings improvements achieved.</li> <li>19. Arrangements for monitoring and prioritising DDA buildings improvements in place.</li> <li>20. Consultation on usage of the Prayer Room and ensuring space is used frequently for other 'wellbeing' activities as well as prayer.</li> <li>21. Employment Target: Top 5% earners and whole workforce who are from BME communities – slightly above target.</li> <li>22. Strategy in place to ensure each Learning Community has adequate provision of child care, based upon the completed assessment of need.</li> <li>23. Progress against Learning Community Strategy reviewed.</li> <li>24. Analysis of ethnicity and SEN as part of the Early Year's</li> </ol>

	<p>Census Returns and by areas of deprivation completed to identify proportion of people accessing pre-school provision.</p> <p>25. Review of Children's Centres carried out annually; assessment includes access by vulnerable and excluded groups.</p>
<p>% work in progress/slightly below target</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Phase 2 of the Plain English and Easy Read Project.</li> <li>2. Equality considerations built in to contract monitoring policy and guidance (pending development of generic monitoring arrangements).</li> <li>3. Pledge 1 of the BSL Charter achieved (pending an audit).</li> <li>4. Pledge 5 of the BSL Charter achieved (pending an audit).</li> <li>5. Results of all public consultations and surveys analysed.</li> <li>6. Engaging equality target groups in consultation activities.</li> <li>7. Reporting of homophobic and trans-phobic incidents in schools.</li> <li>8. Effective and efficient procedures for accessing translators and interpreters (language line codes are being rolled out).</li> <li>9. Improving public transport information in line with national performance indicator.</li> <li>10. Results of staff surveys fed back to staff.</li> <li>11. Increasing the number of staff involved in supporting equality based organisations by contacting relevant organisations (Employee Volunteering).</li> <li>12. Objectives and targets for all service plans are developed, arising from completed Equality Impact and Needs Assessment and community feedback.</li> <li>13. Service monitoring (diversity) systems in place across relevant council services.</li> <li>14. Employment Targets: Top 5% earners who are women, top 5% earners who are disabled, and disabled staff across the whole workforce – slightly below target.</li> <li>15. EINA of the complaints procedure completed and scrutinised by Equality Reference Group.</li> <li>16. EINAs completed by order of priority.</li> </ol>
<p>% not started/significantly below target/on hold</p> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Equality groups considered as part of corporate engagement/participation strategy, formerly Reputations Programme (on hold subject to development of strategy).</li> <li>2. Flexible working practices promoted through case studies (seeking resource to lead this project).</li> <li>3. Translation and interpreting policy and procedures publicly promoted (pending completion of language line roll out).</li> <li>4. Increasing the diversity of Acceptable Behaviour contacts</li> </ol>

	<p>(pending a decision about ownership of the work).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Promoting Acceptable Behaviour contacts.</li> <li>6. Challenging unacceptable behaviour as part of the management competency framework (roll-out of framework is on hold).</li> <li>7. Provision of accessible ticket machines at all council run (on-street) pay and display reviewed.</li> <li>8. Use of complaints information by services (subject to developments with corporate complaints system).</li> <li>9. Raising awareness of the Prayer and Contemplation Room at County Hall.</li> <li>10. Service user monitoring and analysis carried out in accordance with guidance (pending development of systems across council).</li> <li>11. DDA compliant access to pre-school/out of school buildings per Learning Community assessed. (To be completed 09-10)</li> </ol>
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### **Equality Impact and Needs Assessments:**

For further information please see Directorate equality impact and needs assessment programmes of review at [www.devon.gov.uk/equality\\_impact\\_needs\\_assess.htm](http://www.devon.gov.uk/equality_impact_needs_assess.htm) or contact the Corporate Equality Officer for a hard copy.

### **Equality Reference Group**

We continue to be grateful for the steer from of our Equality Reference Group who have supported us over the year on a number of activities, including their regular attendance at corporate Equality Strategy Group meetings. In particular, members were part of the focus groups for the Mock and Peer Assessment against Level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local Government and the Audit Commission’s review of equality and diversity.

Currently the Equality Reference Group cover the following strands: older people, younger people, disability, gender, race/ethnicity and LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender).

Reference Group members continue to support the knowledge development of staff involved in equality through questioning. The group has been strengthened by the opportunity to meet together prior to full Equality Strategy Group meetings so that issues can be considered collectively and a co-ordinated response is presented in meetings.

Over the year the group have advised and commented on:

- Fair for All Programme and Level 3 Improvement priorities
- Environment, Economy and Culture Directorate business plan

- Procurement – support for contractors in meeting equality requirements
- Positive Action in recruitment
- Gender issues in relation to public transport
- Local licensing for ‘lap-dancing clubs’ and the impact on community safety for women
- Photographs and images used by the Council
- Equality Strategy Group terms of reference
- Training, and monitoring the impact of staff training
- Using Equality Impact and Needs Assessment as a planning tool
- Community Cohesion strategy
- Managing the agenda in terms of ‘the equality strands’ and cross-cutting themes
- The need to raise awareness of the community profiles produced by Strategic Intelligence
- The Exeter bombing incident and its impact on women and minority ethnic/faith communities
- The equality and diversity web-pages
- Progress with buildings improvements to meet the Disability Discrimination Act
- Disabled parking issues
- Youth Entrepreneurship summer school

Members of the group also featured in monthly editions of Stellar and Insider staff newsletters to raise awareness of the Equality Reference Group and the organisations they represent.

### ***New Joint Declaration for Equality – a Vision for the Partnership***

A charter aimed at upholding the human rights of everyone in Devon was officially signed at a meeting of the Devon Strategic Partnership on 7th November 2008. The Devon Strategic Partnership (DSP) invited all organisations in the county to sign up to its Joint Declaration for Equality.

DSP chairman, Sally Foxhall, Chief Superintendent Jo Tennant, Commander for Devon Cornwall Constabulary and Devon County Council Leader Cllr Brian Greenslade were amongst the first to sign.

Developed by members of the Devon Equality Partnership (a network of equality officers from organisations across Devon) and the Equality Strategy and Scrutiny Group of the DSP, the Joint Declaration states that organisations signing up recognise the importance of putting the needs of people first, and promoting and upholding the human rights and equal rights of everybody in Devon including asylum seekers, migrant workers, nomadic communities, refugees, residents, students and tourists.

The aim is for Devon to continue to develop as a thriving county with strong, cohesive and happy communities, by putting equality, fairness and human rights at the heart of service delivery, economic success, education and employment.

The Declaration defines an Equal Society and the following Vision of Equality and Fairness for Devon:

- People achieve their own potential and a good quality of life.
- Everyone can use or access services, facilities or information.
- There is public influence over decision making, planning, policy and service delivery.
- There is a strong understanding of the diverse range of needs in Devon's communities.
- At all levels, the business community and our workforce is supported and reflects the community.
- Devon is a stronger, safer and inclusive community.
- People having trust and confidence in the signatory organisations.

Each of the organisations signing up to the Declaration agrees to work to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment.
- Promote equality of opportunity.
- Promote good relations and positive attitudes towards and between all people.
- Encourage participation in public life.
- Take steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires 'more favourable treatment'.

They also agree to help make Devon a county where everyone feels safe and respected and to monitor their own actions to check for discrimination in employment and the provision of goods or services.

Leader of Devon County Council, Cllr Brian Greenslade, said: "The signing of this Declaration underpins our commitment to promoting equal opportunities for everyone living and working in Devon - whatever their circumstances, background or disability. Representing some of the key organisations across Devon, we as partners must all ensure we strive to eliminate discrimination and promote harmony across different cultural and religious boundaries, as well as ensuring our services meet the needs of everyone who uses them. This Declaration is an important first step in the process, which represents a firm commitment from all partners to address these issues."

[www.devon.gov.uk/equalitydeclaration.pdf](http://www.devon.gov.uk/equalitydeclaration.pdf)

## Customer Service and Equality Awards 2009

Staff from across the organisation were honoured for their commitment, care and service to the people of Devon at a special award ceremony in March.

The Customer Service and Equality Awards celebrated the achievements of staff from all areas of the County's work. This year, a record number of nominations were received with over 160 people being put forward for at least one of the six award categories:

- Service with a smile
- Going the extra mile
- Reaching Out
- Clear Communication – Sponsored by Corporate Communications
- The Big Thank You
- Equality Best Practice

The Equality Best Practice Award, recognised outstanding initiatives that have really made a difference to the way the Council does things and to people's lives.

Twelve successful initiatives were put forward as finalists and the winners, The Hikmat Black and Minority Ethnic Centre, were presented with their award by Martin Green, Senior Manager, Audit Commission:

### **The Hikmat Centre - community based drop-in facility for older Minority Ethnic people.**

Based in Sidwell Street, Exeter, the Hikmat (meaning wisdom) Centre opened its doors in December 2005 and is contracted to Devon County Council. It has its own support workers, all of whom speak either Arabic, Cantonese, Mandarin, Hakka or Urdu. It also has an outreach project known as the Sahara BME mentoring programme in East Devon, Mid Devon and North Devon.

The centre was initially opened to provide social contact and service information to older Muslims in Exeter. In 2006 the Chinese community approached the centre and asked if their isolated older persons could meet. Many did not speak English and were unaware of the statutory services available to them.



Today the centre has users from the Indian sub continent, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Hong Kong and China - all residents of Devon. As the only centre of its kind in Devon, many users travel to the centre from outside Exeter.

Hikmat offers a weekly programme of support services for elders from any minority community who can drop-in on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Their needs are identified and met by working with various agencies throughout the county.

Fakhira Ashfaq, Hikmat Centre Manager told us: “Older people come to us so that they can socialise. Being able to speak their own language once a week with others cannot be underestimated, for the rest of the week they may not see anyone.

“My staff and I were very happy to receive this award. To celebrate we have had cakes baked by the Chinese users, and a nice lunch cooked by the ladies who attend the Thursday Group. We have a variety of community groups. One of our groups is run by a Libyan lady who teaches Arab cooking. Several Chinese ladies attend as they want to learn to cook different food. In turn the Chinese ladies will share their cooking skills. We are supported by other organisations, and we are able to assist the users with accessing health and social care – or other County and City Council Services which people in Devon know about, but our users do not. We have about 70 users. Working with people from different cultures, speaking different languages, and religions is not easy – diversity is everywhere.

We encourage the communities who attend Hikmat to integrate – and Sahara has helped a lot. We now have about 14 mentors all of whom speak a variety of languages and are working across Devon. It is very important that staff speak other languages, as this enables us to reach out to people and helps people trust us. Work in Hikmat takes a long time – we tell this to anyone wanting to come and consult with us. Translating and interpreting means everything works slowly.”

Any older person from any ethnic background who wants to come along is welcome.

If you would like to find out more please email either: [hikmat@stsidwells.org.uk](mailto:hikmat@stsidwells.org.uk) or

[saharaproject@googlemail.com](mailto:saharaproject@googlemail.com). Mobile: 07976876979. Website:

[www.diversedevon.org/projects](http://www.diversedevon.org/projects)

The other twelve finalists were:

**Senior Council for Devon** - a focus for the voice of older people in Devon both in policy development and service planning.

**Devon Access Wallet** - created for those people with a disability, learning or communication difficulties, who are deaf or whose first language is not English and who find public transport

difficult to use. So far over 1,000 have been distributed throughout Devon, so that's 1,000 more people supported to get around easily.

**Deaf Awareness Group** – see feature on page 53.

**Procurement** - helping small minority-owned businesses in Devon to be effective in tendering for work, and ensuring that Devon's decision-making processes through tendering stages are inclusive of equality, diversity and rural considerations and impacts.

**Devon Records Office – Lesbian, Gay Bisexual & Transgender Month** - see feature on page 48.

**New Corporate Equality Website** - the new equality website runs to nearly 100 pages covering all aspects of equality and diversity including how we are performing and what the Devon context is. Aimed at all Devon communities and individuals looking for information about our county, the website was reviewed as an offshoot of the Plain English project and involved all equality reps, customer service champions, service heads, community engagement staff and some County Councillors as well as a number of external partners and stakeholders.

**Youth Cultural Champions** - see feature on page 43.

**Strategic Intelligence Equality Day** - see the feature on page 38.

**Devon Supporting People service.**

**Easy Read Fact Sheets for Adult & Community Services** - see feature on page 28.

**EINA Facilitators within Environment, Economy and Culture** - The volunteer facilitators provide advice and guidance to colleagues on completing Equality Impact Needs Assessments. To improve the quality of impact assessments produced across the authority they have been sharing their best practice by working across directorates to increase understanding and awareness for group managers, policy and strategy developers.

## ***Guidance and Policies – Shaping our Approaches***

This year we produced the following guidance and policies:

- Translation and Interpreting Policy
- Customer Diversity Monitoring Guidance (to be piloted in key services)
- Involving All People – guidance on consulting with equality target groups
- Guidance on supporting Trans-gendered employees
- New Equality Impact and Needs Assessment toolkit



**Outcome: People achieve their own potential and a good quality of life.**

### ***Devon Achieved Fairtrade Status – October 2008***

Devon was awarded Fairtrade status having met all the targets laid down by the Fairtrade Foundation. In order to receive the stamp of approval from the Fairtrade Foundation, the Devon Fairtrade Steering Group had to demonstrate that a certain proportion of shops, cafes and other outlets sell Fairtrade products, and a proportion of employers use Fairtrade products in their canteens, vending machines and other outlets.

Fairtrade will result in better prices, decent working conditions, local sustainability, and fair terms of trade for farmers and workers in the developing world. By requiring companies to pay a fair price and an additional social premium,

Fairtrade addresses the injustices of conventional markets which traditionally discriminate against the poorest producers. Fairtrade producers also address inequalities within their communities, for example by combating child labour and by making sure women are represented on decision-making bodies.

### ***Update on the Independent Travel Training***

Twelve pupils have now been taught how to travel independently and safely through Devon County Council's independent travel training initiative that was launched earlier this year.

Southbrook College piloted the project in Devon, assisting children with special needs to access public transport.

The scheme is being rolled out across Devon and pupils referred by their parents or college are now being trained at Bidwell Brook, East Devon College, ISCA College, Exeter College and Sidmouth College.

Devon County Council now has two travel trainers, Tina Rabbitts and Karen Grose, who help the children learn road safety, money skills, how to tell the time and read timetables, and what to do in an emergency. Before a child is allowed to travel on their own, it has to be agreed that they are able to do so safely and a thorough risk assessment is completed.

Parents who would like their child to take part in the scheme, which is free to pupils eligible for transport, should contact their school or college. Or for more information visit:

[www.devon.gov.uk/independenttravel](http://www.devon.gov.uk/independenttravel)

## ***Migrant Worker Task Group – an Update***

The Devon Strategic Partnership Migrant Worker Task Group has reviewed its action plan and is funded by the Council to continue its work into 2009.

Six community hubs have now developed to widen participation of migrant workers.

The Welcome Pack was launched for a pilot with the Polish community and is shortly to be reissued in four languages in hard copy and seven languages on the web, funded by Devon County Council. It was so popular that demand exceeded supplies of hard copies but we were able to refer people to an on-line version.

A mapping of networks and organisations supporting migrant workers was undertaken through Safer Devon Partnership and the Community Council of Devon.

## ***Boosting Reading Skills Amongst Young People***

This year's Summer Reading Challenge for children at Devon County Council Libraries has seen a massive 72% increase in the number of youngsters who completed the programme. The challenge was to encourage children to read six books across the summer holidays.

This year 5,097 children took part, a 13% increase on last year and 72% more than completed the six books in 2007. The theme was the sporting 'Team Read' which reflected the Beijing Olympics.

## ***Visually Impaired Group Celebrates Quarter Century***

Devon's oldest library-based group for visually impaired people celebrated its 25th anniversary this year.

The Dawlish group meets once a month to discuss books that are available on formats suitable for people with sight problems - including CD, cassette, LP and Braille.

Margaret Noel from Dawlish Library, who has worked in the library for 25 years, said: "Over the years we have had some wonderful members of the group including a wartime merchant seaman who kept us entertained with tales of shore leave antics, a Memsahib from the days of the Raj in India, a lady who received a gold medal from the Diabetic Society for being the longest surviving person suffering from glaucoma and diabetic related illnesses, and a guide dog that used to steal our biscuits."

"The group is not just about books though. It is a social occasion where people exchange views, discuss new innovations, pass on tips to recently blind or partially sighted and tell new people about other events or groups that are going on."

Over the years the group has hosted evenings for other reading groups from around Devon and this year held a quiz for the National Year of Reading in which visually impaired readers were paired with sighted people. Members have also attended Devon County Council's Forum for Older People and added their views to debates on issues affecting them.

## ***English as an Additional Language Special Education Needs Project***

Karen Harris, educational psychologist, and Heather Day from the English as an Additional Language team have been conducting a small piece of Action Research in All Saints Marsh Primary School in order to develop a joined up assessment and working practice for pupils who are identified as having EAL and Special Education Needs.

Heather and Karen conducted joint assessments and consultations with school staff for each of the children and an action plan was established for each pupil.

Following this work with individual pupils, Heather and Karen have continued to work towards establishing clear guidance regarding how our teams work together and how our assessments and working practices can complement each other.

In addition, they have been working to support a specific family with EAL and have been liaising with a range of services and professionals in order to try and improve service practice regarding communicating with families who have EAL, and encouraging services to provide translated written documentation and interpreters as appropriate. As part of this on going work they have been working closely with the Multilingua Community Interpreting Service.

## ***Disability Sport***

The Devon Forum for Disability Sport includes representatives from local authorities including Devon County Council, educational establishments, community, disabled and sports organisations and the English Federation of Disability Sport.

The group is committed to increasing opportunities in sport and physical activity for all disabled people. As a result of attracting additional resources a number of specialist jobs with a focus on disability sport including a Disability Football Officer, Special School Sports Co-ordinators and an Adaptive Rowing Coach have been appointed in recent years.

The group has been working towards the Devon Ability Games to Inspire to be held at Ivybridge Community College on 1st July and has just developed its first action plan.

For more information on the work of the Forum and on disability sport in Devon, please visit [www.activedevon.org](http://www.activedevon.org) and go to 'Get Active' and then 'Disability Sport' on the left hand menu.



**Outcome: Everyone can use or access our services, facilities or information.**

### ***Plain English and Easy Read – Helping People Access Information***

In response to community feedback we have been working on our Plain English and Easy Read campaign. We have now completed 'phase 1' of the Plain English and Easy Read project in which we have: published policy and guidance on Plain English and Easy Read, carried out awareness raising through newsletters and a dedicated web page on Communicating Clearly. We have set up a network of Plain English and Easy Read experts, audited our web-pages and purchased Photosymbols, an Easy Read package. The number of Photosymbols users within DCC is currently 63.

The Clear Communication award was introduced this year as part of the Customer Service and Equality Awards. The winner of this year's first award was the Leaving Care Pack:

Designed by Children and Young People's Services Publications Team Kelly Doonan and Wendy Holroyd, working with Care Leavers' Team Practice Manager Emma Thomas and Sophy Miles (a young woman previously in care), the pack contains a raft of advice and information for young people making the transition from care to independent living.

Using clear information, simple language and designs from young people in care, the team created a suite of information cards giving tips on everything from claiming benefits to housing options, along with useful contacts lists for more help. A DVD has also been produced to accompany the pack.

Ian Stewart-Watson, who nominated the team, said of the packs "I think this has been a real partnership, and a great example of how we can act in a corporate way to improve the outcomes for children and young people in our care."

On their award, Kelly said "We're thrilled to win this award. The pack shows how important it is to make sure our information for children and young people is always written and designed for them and with them." Emma added, "We're delighted to have won this award as it really promotes well what we do in the leaving care teams across Devon."

The Leaving Care Pack can be viewed at [www.devon.gov.uk/cyps-leavingcarepack-march09.pdf](http://www.devon.gov.uk/cyps-leavingcarepack-march09.pdf)

## **British Sign Language Charter – Improving Outcomes for Deaf People**

We are making good progress with the Devon BSL Charter but have yet to undertake a formal audit against Pledges 1 and 5.

A significant step forward has been around interpreting provision. Devon County Council led the establishment of a Contract between key public service organisations and the new BSL/English Interpreting agency, Deafinite. We recognised a shortage of Interpreters in the area was making it difficult for Deaf people to access services. A much needed agency could train up new interpreters as well as co-ordinate bookings so that appointments make more efficient use of Interpreter's time and travel, thus reducing costs and impact on the environment and helping build capacity in the area.

With more interpreters and greater awareness of the importance of booking a qualified and registered interpreter, Deaf people are getting better access to services, in particular Health Care – and thus leading to a reduction in health inequalities for Deaf people.

Public services signed up to the Contract meet with the agency every three months to review performance information. In the first six months there was an average of 25 bookings per month. As more people became aware of the agency this rose to an average 63 bookings per month between October 2008 and March 2009.

The organisations involved are: Devon County Council, Exeter City Council, Devon Primary Care Trust, Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Trust, Torbay Care Trust and South Devon Hospital.

Devon & Cornwall Association of Sign Language Interpreters now have 10 members and 5 associate members (trainees). There are also 2 registered interpreters in Cornwall (who are not ASLI members). This has increased from 6 and 1 associate/trainee in October 2006. The agency, Deafinite are supporting two of the full time associate/trainee Interpreters.

“Devon County Council has supported the Deaf Project by passing on our Deaf Awareness and BSL course information to staff working with DCC. DCC staff who have attended the course are more Deaf Aware. That itself is a positive outcome for Deaf people as it is part of the process required for them to be an equal citizen in society. For example, in terms of access to their services, staff at *My Devon*, Tiverton recently completed their 6 Week BSL Taster course. This has enabled Deaf people to be more aware of how to book BSL Interpreters.

DCC has continued to thrive and prosper in making sure Deaf people are being seen and heard. The atmosphere is Deaf Friendly. Relaying information is vital to inform Deaf people of any news and updates”

Kristy Cooper, Living Options Devon Deaf Project.

On 17 March Jo Hooper, equality officer at Devon County Council and Kristy Cooper from Living Options Devon Deaf Project attended the BSL conference in Bristol to showcase the Devon BSL Charter and support the British Deaf Association along with Bristol City Council to get more organisations involved nationally in the BSL Charter.

Jo explained how Devon County Council has supported the development of the Charter and used it to improve access and outcomes for Deaf people. Kristy explained how we were working in partnership through the BSL Charter Group and told delegates about the Deaf Project and Sign Vision consultation events as well as key issues for Deaf people in Devon - how the Deaf community were probably the most socially excluded community in Devon: their issues have been compounded by rural isolation, a lack of interpreters and BSL courses in area, leading to communication barriers.

Jo explained how Devon County Council is committed to achieving all the Pledges of the Charter and how we saw the Charter as a way of making change and meeting our legal duties in relation to the Disability Discrimination Act.

Pledge 3 of the Charter (giving Deaf children the option to learn BSL alongside English) is viewed as the most challenging Pledge to achieve, but we have managed to make good progress by:

- Appointing 2 Deaf Inclusion Workers for children.
- Setting up Together Days, events and video conferencing for Deaf children – to reduce isolation.
- Raising awareness in Schools during Deaf Awareness Week.
- Providing BSL classes for Deaf children and parents, schools, pre-schools and nurseries. BSL skills of students are now formally assessed.
- Supporting training: Most advisory teachers now at BSL Level 2, 6 teachers and 3 teaching assistants and starting pre-Level 3 courses.

We explained that we recognise we still have a long way to go in engaging other businesses and agencies fully – 10 have formally signed up to the Charter.

For more information about the Devon Charter and outcomes of Sign Vision Conferences we have a dedicated webpage: [www.devon.gov.uk/bslcharter](http://www.devon.gov.uk/bslcharter).

## ***Home Library Service – Helping People Who Can't Get to the Library***

A survey of Home Library Service clients in Tiverton, St Thomas and Teignmouth has provided evidence of how important and valued the service is to these frequently housebound users.

The HLS service is a partnership between the library service and WRVS. Volunteers take library books and other materials to individuals in their homes on a regular basis.

- "A bright part moment every fortnight. I could not do without it."
- "Very grateful to the kind people who deliver. They are always cheerful and kind and 'take me out of myself'."

The Home Library Service operates from over 35 libraries across Devon. During 2008/09, following a publicity drive, the number of volunteers grew from 175 to 207 and the number of clients grew from 617 to 647. The profile of clients varies but the common element is that they are unable to access library buildings regularly due to an infirmity or disability. The vast majority of clients are elderly.

Excluding DVDs, all types of library stock are available to clients but the requirement is often for spoken word and large print items.

## ***Registration Service Improvements***

Where possible adaptations have been made to the access of properties used for Registration to comply with the DDA regulations:

- Exeter Register Office – moved from Lower Summerlands to Castle Street in 2006 – now fully compliant.
- Mid Devon – this is a listed building. A portable ramp has been purchased to aid entry to the ceremony room. Offices are accessible.
- East Devon – accessible
- North Devon – accessible
- South Hams – accessible
- Torridge – District Council installed a ramp to the offices.
- West Devon – Town Council carried out a refurbishment which included a lift to the ceremony room and an accessible toilet.
- Teignbridge – This is a listed building. Installed a ramp to the front of the building and fitted an automated front door.

Outstations -

Axminster – moved into a building with better access.

Sidmouth – moved into a building with better access now located in a day care centre.

Crediton – accessible.

Cullompton – accessible.

Ivybridge – moved into a building with better access.

Kingsbridge – accessible.

Holsworthy – accessible.

Okehampton – accessible.

Ilfracombe – accessible.

Exmouth – Offices are on ground floor – Exmouth Town Council have installed a lift to the ceremony room.

Induction loops have been installed in all offices and portable loops are also available. Parking facilities are provided at most registration offices for people with disabilities. Marriage vows are available in Braille and large print material is also available.

All staff have carried out online Disability Awareness Training and at least one member of staff from each office has received BSL awareness training. A member of staff at the Devon Register office has undertaken BSL NVQ level 1.

### ***Social Care for Adults Explained - in a Number of Formats***

The leaflet Social Care for Adults Explained provides important information about Devon's social care services. The leaflets are already available in large print, audio and 10 foreign languages (available online). The next step was to make the information available to the Deaf community, by producing a British Sign Language DVD of the leaflet. The BSL leaflet can be viewed online at [www.devon.gov.uk/socialcare-bsl](http://www.devon.gov.uk/socialcare-bsl).

### ***Time for Life – Community Mentoring Service Reaches Out***

Time for Life is part of the Community Mentoring Service funded by the Partnerships for Older People Project known as My Life My Choice. The aim is to improve the wellbeing of older people in the county. It is personally tailored for anyone experiencing loneliness or simply in need for new friends and things to do after some kind of life change such as disability, illness or bereavement.

The project is reaching out to two minority ethnic communities which has specially trained bi-lingual staff – the Polish Project, and the Sahara Project for people with South Asian and Chinese backgrounds. The Polish Project is initially targeted in Exeter, Tiverton and the Stover areas. 391 older minority ethnic people received highly tailored services in the last year.

## *Disability Information Service*

The Disability Information Service (DIS) provides information, help and support to people with disabilities and/or health conditions and also to their families, friends and carers throughout Devon. The service is situated at the MyDevon Customer Service Centre in Tiverton. There has been a 38.8% increase in call volumes between April 2008 and March 2009 compared with the previous year.

Enquiries are received via the phone, email, fax, post and sms, or are referred from other teams within the MyDevon Customer Service Centre. The advisors have collected a huge amount of information about support and help available to people and much of this information has been made available to the public through the DIS website [www.devon.gov.uk/dis](http://www.devon.gov.uk/dis).

## *The Devon Access Wallet – an Update*

The Devon Access Wallet was first introduced in 2006 as an initiative by Devon County Council, in partnership with First Devon & Cornwall, Stagecoach Devon and First Great Western. So far, over one thousand wallets have been distributed and are currently being used across the county by people with communication difficulties or disabilities, deaf people and those whose first language is not English. It also gives bus drivers and train staff a better understanding of the requirements of these passengers.

Since the launch of the scheme, Devon County Council has worked hard to deliver and demonstrate the scheme at conferences and forums. As a result the use of the wallet has become more widespread and the positive feedback from individuals and groups across the county has been very encouraging (see below).

- “The access wallet is a great idea and it will help our service users to become more confident and independent which is what they need! Thanks again!” - HFT Rivendell, Chudleigh
- “Wonderful idea...instructions were very well put together - very clear and concise!” – Parent of service user.
- “I work for Age Concern Devon as a Community Mentor and the elderly folk I look after are very impressed with the Access Wallets. They feel confident to get on the bus or train now”. – Age Concern.
- “I am registered as a deaf person and have just started using this scheme and I think it is brilliant. It is very helpful to have one of these wallets.” – Service user.

## ***Community Interpreting Service Supported***

In working to ensure that it provides for the needs of all citizens, Devon County Council recognises that it is a fundamental civil right of all people to understand and receive appropriate communication support in order to have equal access to local services.

A service level agreement worth £36,000 was established in order to develop a sustainable local Community Interpreting and Translation Service that will provide Devon County Council and other local organisations from different sectors (e.g. schools, health services, VCOs) with a single point of contact for access to local interpreters and translators with expertise in community languages.

Aims and intended outcomes from the agreement:

- To provide Devon County Council departments, and other local agencies from all sectors with ready access, through a single point of contact, to appropriately qualified and experienced interpreters as required, at a fixed price.
- To ensure Quality Control by making sure that all interpreters employed have received appropriate training, have undertaken CRB checks and have signed up to a recognised Code of Practice.
- To provide Devon County Council, and other agencies, with clear guidelines on best practice in using Interpreters and with access to training opportunities on how to use interpreters.
- To provide local people with suitable language skills who wish to qualify and find work as Interpreters with access to local courses in Community Interpreting.
- To help Devon County Council consult effectively with local minority communities by providing ongoing advice and expert guidance on issues within communities and on points of contact.
- To develop a sustainable model to ensure the continued provision of a robust and responsive Devon Community Interpreting and Translation service.

## ***Event for Minority Ethnic Children and Adults at Exeter Central Library***

Over 50 children and 40 adults from the Exeter and district BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) community attended an afternoon event called 1001 Stories at Exeter Central Library, kindly hosted by Devon Library Services. The event was the idea of Suaad Genem-George of the Devon Racial Equality Council, and Suaad worked in conjunction with Jane Hutchings, Family Learning Coordinator/Equality Champion for Devon Adult and Community Learning and Roger Kirk, Co-ordinator of the Devon Gets Reading campaign.

Jane had organised a team of family learning tutors to run two workshops, one making small books that the children could write in and one making story sticks, where children selected a small stick and decorated it with a wide variety of items – leaves, wool, cut out shapes, letters - each of which told part of the story the child invented. The stick then acted as an aide memoire for retelling the story later.

Suaad had arranged for a number of story tellers to read their stories, including Hanne Chen, a German author who has written as beautiful children's story called *The Moon King*. The story grew out of her response to her children's homesickness when the family moved to California. Hanne read the story together with her daughter and delighted the audience. After Hanne, we had a story told entirely without notes or prompts by Ryan King - a simplified history of the Black civil rights movement in America related with great animation.

Later, we heard a remarkable story from a woman refugee from the Afghan/Pakistan border. Written in English and read by herself, the story was a starkly moving account of her life fleeing the Taliban and coming to live in England. She also read another personal account by a friend, both stories having been encouraged in their writing by a special project supported by the University of Exeter.

### ***Working with Travelling Families***

Devon Libraries have been working with the Traveller Education Service to provide access to books for Travellers with young children. A support worker has been offering the families she works with the opportunity to borrow from a collection of picture books, which is regularly updated, and the chance to collect the Bookcrawl stickers and certificates.

20 Bookstart packs have been handed by out by Traveller Education staff during the last financial year (2008-2009). The support worker who has recently started offering picture books on loan to Travellers' children reports that they have been well received. One child has started Bookcrawl and "loves collecting the stickers".

### ***Bookstart Continues to Support Families with Additional Needs***

Following on from the introduction of Booktouch, a pack (part of the Bookstart range) which supports families of children who are blind or partially-sighted, a new Bookshine pack has been launched for families of children who are deaf. This includes two specially chosen books designed to stimulate children's senses, including a touch and feel book and a nursery rhyme book featuring BSL signs.

Over the year, 32 Booktouch packs were handed out by health visitors, through the West of England School for children with little or no sight and through the Honeylands Children's Centre.

Nicky Searle at the West of England School comments:

“40% of our brains are given over to visual information and 80% of our learning is visual. Even in a person born blind, the 40% of the brain that's visual, is filled with visual information but gained from the other senses. Therefore anything that encourages links between the remaining senses will increase the chances of the child functioning more independently, later on.

Books that link experiences like playtime to sounds, smells, tastes and tactile items are brilliant for building 'pictures' of the world, for the child. The touch and feel playtime book is brilliant for this - it describes the activity or item the child will recognise and gives them a different, relevant, tactile sensation for each description. The 'explore and learn' book is slightly more abstract. It's great for the child to experience the different textures but the story is less related to their experiences and the tactile parts don't feel like the 'real' item would - sighted people rely on their visual knowledge to recognise representations of something. The rhyming language is really good, though.

The leaflets included are comforting to parents, helping them realise they can help their child access things most people take for granted and advising them of relevant specialist bodies. The Rhymetime book is a great idea coming with a CD. Most of the older students here, even proficient brailleists, prefer to access fiction through audio book. Introducing this format early can only be good. From an educational perspective, including other languages, and songs with lots of description, with opportunity to add actions and/or noises, sparks interest and adds fun to 'reading'.

I think (parents too) that it's really positive to have produced a pack for Visually Impaired youngsters - it's such a low incidence disability that it could easily be missed. In future, books could be produced with simple Braille sentences or words added, as pre-reading for sighted people includes being familiar with letters and knowing that these symbols carry meaning.”

Over the year 22 Bookshine packs were handed out by health visitors and through the Honeylands Children's Centre.

Suzanne Pearce at Honeylands comments, “We have also used this pack within our groups, and it has worked brilliantly”.

### ***MP3 Spoken Word Resource***

The Library Service has now launched MP3 Spoken Word CD Collection at four libraries – Tavistock, Exeter Central, Barnstaple and Newton Abbot. These are targeted specifically at blind or visually impaired people as they are likely to find the format much easier to manage. The MP3 CDs are issued as books for people with a visual impairment, free of charge. The

collections each consist of approximately 50 items and have been issued 891 times since July 2008. Disabled and non-disabled users are both accessing this service.

They have proved to be very popular, and we have received very positive feedback. We issued a questionnaire to each borrower. People said that they found that having only 1 disc instead of the usual 10 or 12 meant that they were lighter to carry, they only had the one disc to put into the machine instead of having to check each disc was always in order first before they could listen to them and then having to change them once one disc ended. They are so much easier for people with sight difficulties or physical disabilities to use as well as being a great choice for borrowers who have no disabilities.

In addition, the library service is experimenting with a different MP3 format, called 'Playaways' at Ilfracombe Library. This is a self-contained audiobook that is a player in it's own right and therefore does not need an MP3 disc player or PC. This collection was only added in February 2009 but the early signs are positive with 75 issued in the first three months. Feedback on Playaways from customers include:

- Liked the technology
- Display was too small to see (partially sighted person)
- Thought it was really good
- Easy to use
- Liked the whole concept - brilliant
- Very good idea
- Battery runs out with a very long story e.g. Wilbur Smith and new battery throws you back to beginning, otherwise excellent
- Excellent, able to listen in bed in the dark and buttons easy to remember
- Customer with very little sight liked the technology but needed help with battery, too fiddly
- Excellent.

### ***LGBT Information Pages on Devon Libraries Website***

Promoting services to LGBT - Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Trans - people were highlighted as a priority for the library service in Directorate plans and the best way of achieving this was to use the website to best effect.

The pages now include bibliographies of LGBT titles in stock and useful website links for information and guidance. The additions to the website were completed in time for LGBT History Month in February 2009 and are now permanently linked from:

[www.devon.gov.uk/index/cultureheritage/libraries/libraries-lgbt.htm](http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/cultureheritage/libraries/libraries-lgbt.htm)

In addition, the library service has purchased dozens of new LGBT themed titles to be placed all over the county.

The Intercom Trust, a voluntary sector agency supporting LGBT people complemented the service on its new resource. A response from Exeter Central Library was also very encouraging:

“After the book display we created for the LGBT event here in the library in February a young man came and joined and he was impressed by the link to the LBG and LGBT young adult collections on the library website. I printed off the list of authors we had in the LGBT young adult collection and he took this away to talk about in his youth group. He also borrowed some books, came back and told me that the books had encouraged him to start reading for pleasure again.”

### ***Books on Prescription***

The existing Books on Prescription scheme has been expanded during 2008/09 from its heartland in Exeter and East Devon to include most of the county. The scheme is a partnership between Devon Libraries and Devon PCT to provide library books from a clinically approved list to people with a mild-moderate mental health problem such as depression or panic attacks.

The books are intended for use as part of a programme of counselling and guided sessions with Graduate Mental Health Workers.

Since December 2004 over 1,300 people have brought their prescription into a Devon library and received one of the books for loan.

### ***Devon Records Office Sensory Box***

The Devon Record Office has been working in partnership with the West of England School and College to encourage pupils to learn about archives as a historical resource. The Devon Record Office identified that there was a barrier to learning for those with little or no sight, as no resources existed to support their learning experiences in an archive environment.

The Devon Record Office worked with the school's history department for this unique project. The decision was to focus on trade links between Britain and India during the 1800s. The result was to create a sensory box of replica archival material and objects to help encourage pupils'



understanding of how documents fit into a wider historical context. The sensory box featured a replica letter dated c.1842, written by a Captain of a trading ship, detailing his journey to India as well as a replica map, showing the trade routes between Britain and the East (both held at the Devon Record Office). The letter was reproduced in Braille on parchment and the map and the trade routes depicted were also specially raised to aid learning. The box also contained a collection of spices put into smelling bags- with Braille tags attached, some old coins and a replica seal. The sensory box was fundamental to the teaching module and facilitated a visit to the archive by the school and a storytelling session.

This sensory box is the first of its kind to be used in an archive environment. The use of Braille on parchment has never been tried before and gave the pupils a real understanding of how difficult it can be to read old documents as well as allowing them to gain a better awareness of the different types of writing materials used in the past. The handling box was funded by the MLA and will be available to schools to hire through the Devon Record Office.

The teacher response to the learning sessions was very positive, “the pupils never talk this much in lessons, they are really engaging with it”. The pupils also responded - one student said “I had heard about a seal on a letter from my audio book but I didn't realise what one was until today”. Another said “until I visited the Record Office I hadn't felt a book that big”. Additionally, the sensory box model was shared at a recent South West Learning and Access Officers meeting, with positive feedback. Many archives across the South West were inspired by the idea and are taking elements of it to include in their own outreach. For example, the Gloucestershire archive is using smelling bags in its new Tudor handling box to increase the audience they can reach.

The Record Office will be continuing to work with the West of England School in the future.

## ***Improving Access to North Devon Coast and Countryside***

### **Adults with learning difficulties**

Throughout 2008-9, the coast and countryside service has provided and supervised volunteer tasks on Coast Path, Tarka Trail and Community Sites for young adults with learning difficulties from the Barnstaple area. More than 30 events have been held and, at each, between 8 and 14 students have developed their confidence and skills in a countryside setting.

### **South West Coast Path Association Access to Nature bid**

A bid to English Nature to provide all terrain mobility vehicles (Trampers) on the Tarka Trail and Coast has been developed with Council support and will finally be assessed at the July panel meeting. The bid's main partners are the Coast Path Team at County and Living Options Devon.

Gates have been installed on the Tarka Trail to facilitate easy access at Bagbeer, Dunsbeer, Watergate and Petrockstowe.

Two Easy Access Trail Guides have been produced covering North Devon, and two covering Torridge. These are available as laminated guides or can be downloaded from the website.

### ***Making Stover Country Park Fully Accessible***

The Park has been working with customers and mobility groups to increase accessibility. Progress has been swift, including additional disabled parking and improving widths and gradients of paths. Plans are being made to improve the access to the picnic site and a new pathway to ensure there is a level route around the Park. This has all been done without compromising the fabric of Stover. This is a genuine success story that has changed the customer experience and illustrated a responsive, caring service.

Another project recently completed is a new bird hide to mark the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations - supported financially by donations from the Stover Country Park Association and Devon Bird Watching and Preservation Society. There is level access with a bird's eye view of the lake suitable for anyone in a seating position.

### ***Public Rights of Way***

The County Council has made excellent progress to meeting its target to improve the 'ease of use' of public rights of way, which currently stands at 95%. Two new accessible footpath links have been created in partnership with South Hams District Council, the first at Ashprington and the second at West Charleton.

Information about access to the countryside is available through an on-line interactive map – at [http://www.devon.gov.uk/public\\_rights\\_of\\_way](http://www.devon.gov.uk/public_rights_of_way) click on My Local Paths. Following consultation with the Citizen's Panel in March, in which access to the countryside was explored, the Accessible Trails Booklet has been produced.



## ***Transport Coordination Service – More Accessible Buses***

In the last 6 months the following bus services have been grant aided for the provision of new easily accessible low floor buses: 77, 510, X9 and 2.

During 2008-9, 90 bus stops were upgraded with improved information flags and displays and 150 bus stops have been improved with raised kerbs.



**Outcome: There is public influence over decision making, planning, policy and service delivery.**

### ***Strategic Intelligence – Equality Day: Understanding our Communities Through Equality Data and Mapping***

There have been further advances in seeking to understand diversity groups or ‘communities of interest’ across Devon. Around 100 people attended an ‘Equality Day’ in November resulting in a lively and informative debate about the evidence on equality and diversity. The questions and suggestions made have fed into the work programme for the current year.

Put on by our Strategic Intelligence Team, the aim of the event was to encourage discussion and debate amongst the speakers and audience about how best to improve the use and quality of the evidence base for equality and diversity in Devon.

The day was an opportunity to flag up the evidence base and data currently available for enabling equality of provision and to raise awareness of the areas where poor or non-existent data coverage indicates a need for investigation and action.

Speakers were drawn from partner organisations in the public and voluntary/community sectors including Devon Primary Care Trust, Faithnet SW, Intercom Trust, Living Options Deaf Project, South West Opportunities for Older People and Devon County Council. The morning session was Chaired by Devon County Councillor Des Hannon.

One particular message from the day was the need to recognise that individuals may belong to more than one community and to understand that differences are contained within those communities.

At the event, the **new Diverse Devon Data resource** was launched:

[www.devon.gov.uk/equalityanddiversity](http://www.devon.gov.uk/equalityanddiversity)

Service managers, policy officers and Members alike can access this information and use it to build a picture on which to make informed decisions about policy or service delivery. Already the Devon Towns project, as a result of the event, is focussing more on the diversity of communities in the 28 towns.

## ***Empowering People with Learning Disabilities***

Consultation with people with a learning disability in Devon has led to the re-structuring of all service user involvement contracts. A new model has been developed for service user involvement called the Devon Learning Disability Parliament Project. This Project will give people a stronger local voice and bring stakeholders together to tackle issues that matter to them, enabling people with a learning disability to become MPs and represent and speak up for others.

The Parliaments and their MPs will influence decision making in services, design and planning with projects led and controlled by people with a learning disability. Minority groups, such as those with complex needs, will be enabled to speak up. The model is based around the development of four new Parliaments starting from the 1st May 2009.

A new accessible tender process for people with learning disability and family carers, developed working with Devon County Council's contracts team and used for Person Centred Planning and Parliament tenders, including the creation and development of resources to enable people with a learning disability to assess, evaluate and take a fully active and responsible role in the appointment of contracts.

Training will be given to increase the number of trained WASP (words and symbols person) users, training them in the use of plain English and Easy Read, to help people with learning disability get involved in meetings.

## ***Corporate Consultation and Engagement***

We continue to work closely with partner organisations (districts, unitaries, Police, Fire, PCT and Dartmoor National Park) to identify and work with individuals and organisations who can facilitate access to minority groups of all kinds. Not only does this provide a more effective, efficient and organised way of engaging people, it also increases the potential for collaborative working and reduces 'consultation overload' for those groups of people.

Two major pieces of consultation carried out recently are the Corporate Staff Survey and the nationally prescribed Place Survey.

We have approached around 10,000 members of staff and with over 3,000 responses have a lot of information which can be analysed by 'equality' questions including nature of disability, attitudes and support provided - this has been analysed to identify any equality issues/discrimination and to suggest which areas of the organisation may need additional training, awareness etc. This survey is carried out annually and provides the opportunity to track the success of initiatives. Not all questions are asked annually as some changes are better measured over a longer period of time.

The Place Survey is carried out nationally every 2 years starting in 2008 and is sent to a random sample of households - we have combined the responses from all 8 districts in the county to form a database of over 11,000 residents. These are classified by age, gender, race and disability and a response of this size is also providing a great deal of useful analysis at 'Devon Town' level. However, we recognise that it does not cover all of the equality strands and so are looking into other means of collecting additional data for analysis. The Place Survey will form the basis for much of the work to engage with all communities of interest, in some cases at a local level, and results from the survey will be further discussed with minority religious and LGBT groups. Data has not yet been officially published by central government so use is currently restricted to internal and partners on confidential basis.

There is still uncertainty about the viability of producing a county wide strategy for engagement. However, all elected members have been briefed on the new Duty to Involve, including specific attention to potentially marginalised groups.

Development of Community Boards is delayed due to the delay in the Local Government Reorganisation, but community engagement and the development of inclusive Community Forums is still a key aspect of those plans.

### *Take Part Pathfinder*

Devon County Council supports Take Part Pathfinder, which ties in well with our current and planned activity to develop citizen involvement in local decision making.

For the last three years we have had a target through the LPSA2 programme to increase volunteering and to develop participation and active citizenship for young people. Both programmes have been successful.

The 2008-11 Local Area Agreement, agreed between Devon Strategic Partnership partners and central government includes the designated national indicators NI4 and NI7, both of which require the development of programmes to support 'active citizenship'. It is likely that there will be particular emphasis on the need to encourage participation from people who might not normally come forward, such as people living in more deprived communities, those with disabilities or from BME groups, and we will be exploring with Exeter CVS (should the bid be successful) how the Take Part programme would be able to support the partnership in achieving this objective.

Some potential areas of joint activity might include:

- Encouraging and supporting people to put themselves forward as councillors and parish, town or District / County level
- Supporting people to become trustees or management committee members of their local voluntary organisation or charity

- Supporting people who are taking a community leadership role within their local communities – perhaps through community associations or campaigning groups
- Working with the Governor support unit to recruit and support school governors.

We would also welcome working with the project to map existing programmes and to develop a more joined up approach, possibly through the Council's Adult Community Learning unit.

The Take Part programme would assist the County Council to achieve these aims by working with us to increase the capacity of individuals so that they can become confident, active citizens for the benefit of their communities.

### ***Excellence not Excuses - Multi-ethnic Forum: Helping us Improve Outcomes for Black and Minority Ethnic People***

Excellence not Excuses can help us improve outcomes for Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) people in Devon, by ensuring that racial equality and cultural issues are taken into account where relevant, and the views of minority ethnic people are sought and heard.

This multi-ethnic, multi-disciplinary group began in 2001 writing practice guidance for social workers with BME children, young people and their families as well as the staff publication 'Why does race matter'.

Originally supporting the social care directorates, the group broadened its remit in 2008 and is now assisting the whole of the Council to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate racial discrimination and promote good community relations.

The group is a multi-ethnic forum made up of staff from Devon County Council and partner organisations in public and voluntary sectors; staff from the Devon community who can combine their own experiences and observations of living and working in Devon with an understanding of public service delivery.



**Outcome: Devon is a stronger, safer and inclusive community.**

### ***Photography Project to Create More Diverse Images***

Recognising the need to include more diverse images of people in our publications, a trainer with extensive photographic experience and access to community groups has completed training with a range of Black and Minority Ethnic grassroots organisations and community groups across the county in order to create a photo resource.

In the first stage of a project to increase the range of diverse images from all diversity groups, hundreds of images have been taken and submitted and will be concluded by July 09. The project has set out to be inclusive and capture images of a range of people, not just BME. After this, the collection of approved images for county council use will be available. A 'challenging racial stereotypes' photo exhibition will be hosted during 09/10 and, subject to review, the project will be extended further with more training and more groups taking photographs for the collection.

### ***Supporting Travellers and Gypsies***

The specific needs of Gypsies and Travellers are encompassed within our equality and diversity commitments and in the work programmes of mainstream services within the County Council and its partners.

A multi-agency group led by the County Council has been steering the work of addressing the pressing accommodation needs of this community, together with implementing the recommendations of the Housing Needs Assessment with regard to access to services, particularly health and police support. Our HNA was commended by the Regional Assembly for its thoroughness and independence.

A protocol relating to how we deal with unauthorised encampments is in place and is implemented consistently, with a high degree of tolerance of such encampments by the County Council.

Licenses for the DCC owned and managed sites have been updated to take into account legislation and good practice and the involvement of site residents in improvements to the site and management of on site issues has addressed residents concerns.

## ***Domestic Violence Campaign***

When one in ten employees leave their workplaces and go home, they will suffer violence or abuse from their partner. That was the key message of a new campaign launched by Devon County Council to raise awareness in the workplace about domestic violence and abuse.

The campaign, the first of its kind in Devon, was launched at the Phoenix Centre in Exeter on Thursday 4 September.

The Domestic Violence and Abuse Employer Policy Campaign highlighted how being physically or emotionally abused at home can affect performance at work, and will provide essential support and information to employers. The signs are not always obvious - but for people that spend a significant proportion of their hours in a place of work, employers and colleagues are ideally placed to spot what is going on.

"Research has shown that one in ten people will experience domestic violence and abuse in any one year," said Devon County Councillor and ADVA Chair Jill Owen. "And what happens to you in the privacy of your home - if you are being emotionally or physically abused - can have an impact on how you are at work. That's why this campaign is so vital to raise awareness not only for employers but also employees."

Representatives from Devon's major public and private sectors attended the campaign launch including Devon and Cornwall Police, the Environment Agency and the Primary Care Trust.

[www.devon.gov.uk/community/social\\_issues/domestic\\_violence.htm](http://www.devon.gov.uk/community/social_issues/domestic_violence.htm)

This year, a baseline of repeat incidents at 31% with target reduction to 25% by April 2011 has been agreed with Government Office South West.

## ***Young Cultural Champions***

13 students from St James's School in Exeter and Coombeshead College in Newton Abbot have been taking part in an innovative project set up by Devon County Council - led by the English as an Additional Language Service in collaboration with Devon Development Education, to train young minority ethnic students to be ambassadors for their culture, language and religion and to give presentations about this to a variety of audiences.

The programme promotes community cohesion and demonstrates the untapped talent of students from diverse backgrounds, some who have English as an Additional Language. It also promotes positive attitudes within schools and local communities towards minority ethnic groups.

The students, from years 7, 8 and 9, come from diverse backgrounds including the Turkish, Pakistani, Polish, Ukrainian, Malaysian, British Chinese and British Indian communities. They have been acting as Cultural Champions with students from their own colleges and other schools across the county.

## ***Responding to Community Tensions and Terrorism***

Following the attempted bombing in Exeter City Centre, staff at Devon County Council quickly identified the potential negative impact it may have on our Muslim communities as people looked for someone to blame. Stepping in to support the community in making sure messages were clear, the Exeter Muslim community and the County Council united in their shock and condemnation of the attempted bombing, made the following statement:

"Such an act of terrorism is designed to create division, is indiscriminate in who it affects, and is a crime. We are grateful to the emergency services for their quick and efficient response last week and will do all we can to help the police avert any further incidents and bring all those involved to justice. It is important that this shocking experience pulls us all closer together and does not serve to spread fear and mistrust among communities. We are committed to continuing to work together to promote better understanding and tolerance and to strongly oppose extremism and hatred in whatever form it may come. Devon has a proud history of different communities working together and we must not allow this incident, or anything else, to stop that from continuing."

### **Mohammed Abrar, Imam of Exeter Mosque and Councillor Brian Greenslade, Leader of Devon County Council.**

Following the incident a review took place which also looked at how different groups were affected by the evacuation of Exeter City Centre and after-math. As a result further work has been carried out developing a Community Cohesion Contingency Plan and a simulation exercise, testing the equalities aspects of our emergency response procedures, will take place in July 2009. We have also appointed a permanent Prejudice and Hate Crime Co-ordinator to lead this area of work.

## ***Trading Standards***

We have continued to develop and distribute *ScamWise* material which aims to educate and advise the elderly and vulnerable on how to avoid becoming the victim of bogus doorstep callers and mass communication scams.

We have also had a number of high profile cases against 'rogue traders' including:

- the prosecution of a local builder for defrauding elderly and vulnerable people.

- A ground breaking prosecution of a mass marketing mailing scam which affected vulnerable consumers throughout the country.

As part of our information campaign we have distributed 6,400 copies of our 'So what's the problem?' leaflet, on the dangers of open spaces drinking and proxy selling. This year we also attended the Kongomana Youth Festival, which was attended by youth groups from all over Devon. Leaflets were given out, and attendees entered our prize draw and completed questionnaires on their use of alcohol and tobacco.

We have taken proactive steps to improve engagement with Black and Minority Ethnic businesses and encourage membership of the Buy with Confidence scheme.

We have also acted as champion and gatekeeper to achieve both the Trading Standards Service and the County Council's compliance with the Human Rights Act when undertaking investigations.

### ***Holocaust Memorial Day - 27 January, 2009***

Every year Holocaust Memorial Day takes place on the 27<sup>th</sup> January (commemorating the liberation of Auschwitz). This year two major civic events were organised.

During the day there was an exhibition / display at the Guildhall in Exeter, presentations from a range of Devon schools (2009 is the designated Year of the Child) and a special time of reflection closing the event around 3.00pm. DVD loops, a range of resources and displays and an opportunity to sign the book of condolence for all victims of genocide were at the exhibition. All Devon schools were sent the resource packs from the Holocaust Memorial Trust and many held a special school assembly on the afternoon of the 27<sup>th</sup>. The theme for HMD 2009 was 'Stand up to Hatred'.

During the evening a special question time event, introduced by Phil Norrey (Chief Executive) and chaired by local MP, Anthony Steen, took place. Panellists included:-

Steven Otter, Chief Constable of Devon and Cornwall Police  
 Ricky Croal, Development Office for black and minority ethnic groups  
 Tricia Martin, Diocesan RE Education Officer and Holocaust Trust Educator  
 Martin Goss, Director Diocesan Council for Church and Society  
 Dr Todd Gray, Author and Historian  
 Sally Woodbury, Community worker

## A Conference and Book Launch to Mark International Women's Day

International Women's Day is the story of ordinary women as makers of history. It is rooted in the centuries-old struggle of women to participate in society on an equal footing with men.

On Monday 9th March 2009 some 50 to 60 women and men thoroughly enjoyed a morning event opened by Cllr Brenda Taylor, Member Equality Champion. There followed an amusing and mind-focussing talk from one of Devon's longest serving Councillors, Saxon Spence, whose life-long commitment to equality, and in particular to tackling the inequality that women still face, brought the event to a clear focus.



She gave way to Dr Todd Gray, local historian and author, to launch his new book **Remarkable Women of Devon** at the event.

Dr Gray expressed his thanks for the assistance from Devon County Council that meant his extensive research could be published.

Cllr Taylor was delighted to be presented with the first copy of Dr Gray's new book.

Dr Gray's talk revealed how much of women's history is lost and how regrettable that fact is. Women's significant contributions to the life and times of their age are too often made outside of the 'establishment'. The impact that women have had is not recorded and preserved in the way that men and their deeds are lodged in history. Dr Gray explained how his work took him into fascinating corners of the past, tracing often scant details which have survived against the odds. The stories he disclosed were all inspiring.



The rest of the morning explored **Women in Power and Politics**. Moira Macdonald (left), Coordinator of Fawcett Devon introduced Julia Neville (right), who made the perfect link between women active in Devon's past and those who might wish to be active today. The 'demographic deficit' remains large, with women of today still hugely under-represented in power and politics.

Ms Neville's PhD subject with the Department of Politics, University of Exeter was exploring how women interacted with the local government systems of the 1930s particularly in the health service – which in the Thirties came under local government. The male dominated governing structures of the day meant that women could sometimes achieve greater results by operating outside of those structures.

During the break Dr Gray signed copies of his book.



In the foreground Cllr Spence and Cllr Margaret Rogers in discussion over one of the 1980s Women's Training Roadshow booklets, preserved by Cllr Spence from the days when Devon County Council was involved in encouraging more school-girls to go into science, engineering and technology careers – encouragement which is still necessary today.

Cllrs Jill Owen and Olwen Foggin at Fawcett Devon's display 'Women + the Vote – 90 years on'.



One startling statistic hammered home the scale of our 'democratic deficit'. Since 1918 a total of 4,365 men have been elected to Parliament but just 291 women. Even today less than 20% of our MPs are female.

To end the morning Dr Gray and Ms Neville joined a powerful Question and Answer Panel comprising Devon County Councillors Christine Channon, Vanessa Newcombe, Jill Owen and Saxon Spence. The session was chaired by Moira Macdonald, Coordinator of Fawcett Devon. It soon became clear that very many of the barriers to women's involvement identified in Julia Neville's talk remained issues for women today:

- having children
- unequally shared caring responsibilities
- less access to financial and other resources e.g. as was amusingly suggested "a wife".
- prejudice about a woman's 'place' in society.

Picture: From left to right: Saxon Spence, Julia Neville, Jill Owen, Christine Channon, Vanessa Newcombe, Todd Gray

But some things are particularly changed in today's world. Women are very much a presence on the internet and in particular we use its social features such as Facebook – Cllr Vanessa Newcombe explained the importance to her of Facebook as an added way of keeping in touch with today's young voters, while Cllr Channon reminded listeners of the still very effective traditional ways a Devon County Councillor could stay in touch with local young voters.



The morning ended with thanks to Devon County Council, Dr Todd Gray and Fawcett Devon for their part in organising such a topical and very enlightening event.

One of the best gauges of the event's success was that, from a start where no-one wanted to show her interest in power and politics, by the end three women had changed their minds.

[Article courtesy of Moira Macdonald, Coordinator, Fawcett Devon]

As well as the event, an exhibition at St Stephen's Church in Exeter supported Todd's new publication. The Devon Record Office also produced a booklet which focused on women both historical and modern who all have inspirational stories to tell.

## **Exeter LGBT History Pride Event**

Extracts from Intercom Trust bulletin:

The first ever LGBT Pride Event in Exeter was a stunning success, with packed-out events throughout the day.



Put on by local LGBT people and supporters from X-Plore, the Exeter LGBTQ Youth Group, Exeter University, Devon County Council, Devon and Cornwall police, Cartridges Solicitors and others.

### **Central Library activities**

In Exeter Central Library all week there was an **exhibition** commemorating the life and local connections of Justin Fashanu, Britain's first £1m Black footballer, who courageously came Out to his public as gay in 1990. He was the first, and is still, even ten years later, the only professional footballer to do this. He had already encountered appalling homophobic prejudice in the '80s within this notoriously un-gay-friendly sport. Tragically, Justin committed suicide in 1998.

On the Saturday there was **story-telling** with Claire Viner, from a witty feminist perspective.

Bridget Garrod from Cartridges Solicitors gave a **fascinating talk, 'Laying Down the Law'**, on the legal histories behind LGBT rights, including some important but little-known draft legislation that never reached the statute-book.

There was a well-attended and exciting **open discussion on Cultural Diversity**, in the Music Room, led by a panel: Gill Hanscombe, poet, former journalist with Gay News, women's studies scholar, and author; Sue Sanders and Tony Fenwick, joint national chairs of LGBT History Month; Jeanie Lynch, Lead Officer for Equality and Diversity at Devon County Council Children & Young People's Services; Katherine Weston from Devon Records Office, chaired by Michael Halls from Intercom.



(Photos courtesy of: Alan Quick and Intercom Trust)

### **Devon History Month Toolkit for Schools**

We worked with Devon Children and Young People's Services and Schools Out to produce an LGBT History Month Toolkit for Schools.



**Outcome: People have trust and confidence in us to report incidents or abuse or discrimination**

### ***Research into Homophobic Bullying in Secondary Schools.***

As part of Karen Harris's own thesis research she has been gathering data from secondary schools relating to pupils and staff perceptions of homophobic bullying and the use of homophobic language. The aim of the research is to gain a picture of the current situation in Devon secondary schools regarding the frequency of such bullying and the current procedures in place to reduce and deal with such bullying.

The research has consisted of semi structured interviews with individual teachers and focus groups with young people.

The results of the research will be used as part of the wider Children and Young peoples Anti bullying plan.

Karen hopes that the outcomes of this research can be used to help raise awareness of these issues in secondary schools, encourage further discussion and debate regarding equality of opportunity for minority groups and support schools in establishing good practice regarding addressing homophobic bullying and the use of homophobic language in schools.

### ***Action Taken when a Licensee Acted Unlawfully***

A gay couple were refused a Civil Partnership ceremony by Powderham Castle. Registration Services were contacted but despite efforts the owners refused to allow the ceremony and the Council revoked their license for weddings with effect from 2009 because their actions went against the legal duties in relation to Goods and Services on grounds of Sexual Orientation.

The couple publicly thanked the Council for their actions on local TV.



**Outcome: Across all levels, our workforce is supported and reflects the community**

### ***Workforce Diversity Data***

Equality targets continue to be set for the workforce in relation to gender, disability and race/ethnicity.

Staff within the Chief Executives Directorate were asked to update their employment data on disability. It resulted in an increase of staff declaring a disability from 3.2% to 15.8%. It was recognised that many were long serving members of staff who had acquired a disability since starting employment.

### ***More Flexibility with Changes to the Council's Flexitime Policy***

From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 options for flexible working were improved. A new Flexitime Policy saw an increase in flexible hours and the amount of 'credit' time which can be taken off each month. Flexible hours were extended from 7.00am to 10.00am (previously 8.00am-9.30am) and 3.30pm to 7.00pm (previously 4.00pm-6.00pm). Up to two days or four half days (pro rata for part time staff) may now be taken off in any calendar month.

Under the amended policy, senior staff can now benefit from working flexible hours, subject to agreement with their line manager and providing the needs of the service are met.

This revised policy should help support parents and carers, including women in senior positions.

### ***UK Apprentice of the Year (eskills)***

Devon County Council's Nathan Grimes beat strong competition from IT whizzes from top UK companies to win the eskills UK's Apprentice of the Year title. Nathan, from Stoke Hill in Exeter, works part time in finance and for the corporate web team.

Nathan, who had just turned 19, won the prize for his work in putting together the section of the County Council's website designed specifically for young people, URDevon. He began his apprenticeship with the Council in October 2006 and became a project support officer for the corporate web team. Nathan worked with young people to create URDevon and has helped to

change the way young people regard the authority, by enabling them to access information relevant to them.

ESkills UK said he won the award because of his contribution to the County Council, the wider community, and by demonstrating to others the value of an Apprenticeship programme.

Nathan said: "It is incredible to have the chance to get involved with such interesting projects that really do make a difference to the people of Devon. The recognition I have received for my hard work whilst on the Apprenticeship Programme has been enormously motivating and feeds my desire to succeed and move up the ladder within the organisation.

"It also highlights how Devon County Council values its apprentices, and for young people like me starting their careers it makes the experience a lot more enjoyable knowing you are valued. Winning this award has topped off my apprenticeship and proves just how much of a success it has been for me and at Devon County Council."

Nathan is now in full time permanent employment with the Finance Services Systems Team.

## *Apprentices Hired*

An event was held to celebrate the achievements of our first group of apprentices who have all successfully completed their two year programme and gained employment within the County Council, as well as celebrating the achievements that our 2007 intake of apprentices have made in their first year of the programme.

Since joining the programme our apprentices have undertaken qualifications in Business Administration, Customer Service and ICT, and completed a Foundation and Advanced Apprenticeship framework. They have contributed to range of key organisational projects and helped develop services aimed at supporting young people, they have formed part of interview panels for senior Children & Young People Services posts, undertaken presentations to management board and members, participated in the local authority of the year event, helped represent the voice of young people on the Equality Reference Group, and undertaken volunteering projects within the local community.

Each year the Apprenticeship programme is going from strength to strength and this is largely due to the excellent role the apprentices are playing as ambassadors to the programme.

The scheme has been extended in light of the economic situation and as part of our corporate parenting responsibility we are supporting Children in Care by offering work placements and training and support in application and interview skills.

It is essential that the Council embraces young talent and enthusiasm as part of its future workforce, and we hope that their good example will encourage other young people to consider pursuing a career in local government.

## ***Deaf Awareness Group***

Our staff Deaf Awareness Group has now formed strong links with the Royal Academy for the Deaf College and Hearing Dogs. The group celebrates its first anniversary collaborating with students to practice their British Sign Language Skills by holding Signing Circle meetings. The group is made up of staff from across the directorates and is well supported.



The Deaf Awareness Group have organised several fundraising events to raise monies for Hearing Dogs by roping in supportive staff to bake cakes and sell them and also had a dress down day. The aim is to raise £5,000 for a Hearing Dog. They are now almost half way to meeting this target.

## ***Open Heart Open Minds***

We have supported the e-news/learning service – Open Hearts Open Minds, with £12,000 funding.

Open Hearts Open Minds is a social inclusion e-learning centre, keeping people in touch with essential news, tips and tools to help tackle social exclusion.



Created by and for people at all levels in Devon's voluntary and statutory services, its an easy way to understand more about who's affected by social exclusion and find help to work more inclusively.

Anyone with internet access can Sign Up for the free e-news service and each month they'll receive bite-size instalments of the latest facts and ideas (with no pop-up ads).

[www.openheartsopenminds.org.uk](http://www.openheartsopenminds.org.uk)

## ***Migrants in Devon get English Language Lessons***

The English@work in Devon project aims to ensure that migrant workers work safely and are able to communicate in basic English, boosting the impact migrant workers can make to the economy.

The project is funded by Devon Renaissance, the Learning and Skills Council and the European Social Fund, and is provided by Productive Skills for Devon. The project offers subsidised training within the workplace for groups of workers, or alternatively can provide access to a DVD-based independent learning project for smaller numbers.

The Economy Unit of Devon County Council assists the development and harnessing of skills to achieve a competitive economy in a variety of ways. This includes hosting the Productive Skills for Devon partnership which identifies gaps in provision and initiates action to address those gaps. As the English@work training was no longer free to employees, Devon County Council provided £12k to enable the courses to be offered at no cost in the hope that this would improve uptake.

28 employers and over 200 migrant workers benefited. As a result, most of their employers say that they can work more productively and co-operatively, and many have gone on to enrol in evening classes to gain English qualifications.

## ***Children and Young People Service Equality Officer joins the Council***

We were very pleased when Jeanie Lynch joined the CYPS Directorate as a dedicated Equality Officer. Jeanie has written a 'week in the life of the CYPS equality officer' to show what she gets involved in:

Monday

I took part in an Equality Impact Needs Assessment (EINA) training session. The trainer really challenges the notion that you just need to tick a few boxes on a form – it's the process that matters and involves considering how any new projects, services or policies will impact on different groups. This thorough approach to equality is such a long way away from the naïve approach I used as a play-worker in Devon twenty years ago where equality was a bolt-on and decorative issue, as opposed to being really embedded in our service. Things have certainly changed for the better.

Tuesday

I attended a meeting with the Intercom Trust, an organisation that works with the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities across Devon, Cornwall, Somerset and Dorset. We discussed tackling homophobic bullying and how we can involve young LGBT people in helping to shape our services. There are specific youth groups that meet and we explored how we can safely involve them.

Wednesday

I trawled through the workforce diversity data in order to identify diversity profiles of the workforce. I was previously working for Barnardos London Region, where 45% of our service users were from Black and Minority Ethnic communities, and this was reflected in the workforce, right through to Director level.

Statistically the numbers of BME staff employed in Devon do reflect the diversity of the community, but I am keen to find out about life beyond the statistics and more about BME workers experience of working in such a huge rural county. I contacted a BME workers network and arranged to go and run a focus group with them to find out more.

Thursday

I attended the Equality Strategy and Scrutiny Group of the Devon Strategic Partnership. One item on the agenda is about how to involve young people, or ensure that their views are heard. Two young people attended and give their views but it is clear that in such an adult-heavy environment that we will need to find more creative ways of enabling participation.

We decided to run an away-day involving different groups of young people from across the county along with adults in order to explore how we can truly work together in partnership.

Friday

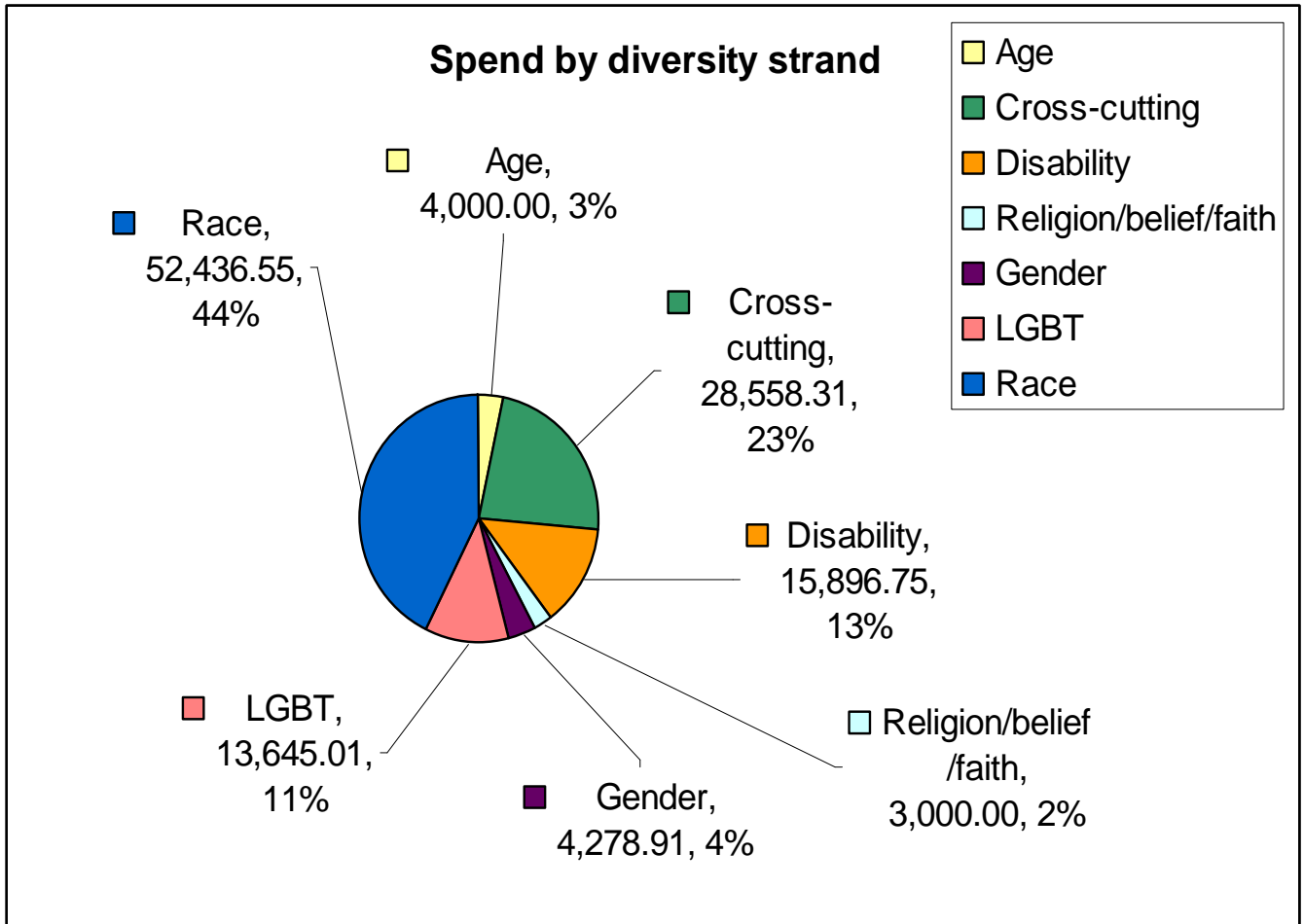
I played 'catch up' with myself, writing reports and reading through the ever growing reams of documents I seem to be gathering! Mid morning an upset parent calls about a racist bullying incident in a school, and she demands action. I explain to her that the first point of call is to contact the Head teacher and then the Governors if she wants to make a complaint. She becomes tearful and says how hard it is when her children start asking negative questions about their ethnicity.

It's situations like this that remind me why I came into this post, and I finish for the week feeling very aware of the challenges that exist for so many of our children and families in Devon – and how important it is that we do our very best to help them to overcome them and truly feel part of their communities.

Jeanie

## Equality Budget 2008-9

Total **Corporate Equality Budget** spend for 2008-9 = £121,815.53, which includes a one-off rescue package of an additional £24,000 for Devon Racial Equality Council.



Funding from other sources (not included in diagrams or amount quoted above):

### Community Strategy Office

Open Hearts Open Minds: £12,000

Supporting the Equality Strategy and Scrutiny Group of the Devon Strategic Partnership: £3,000.

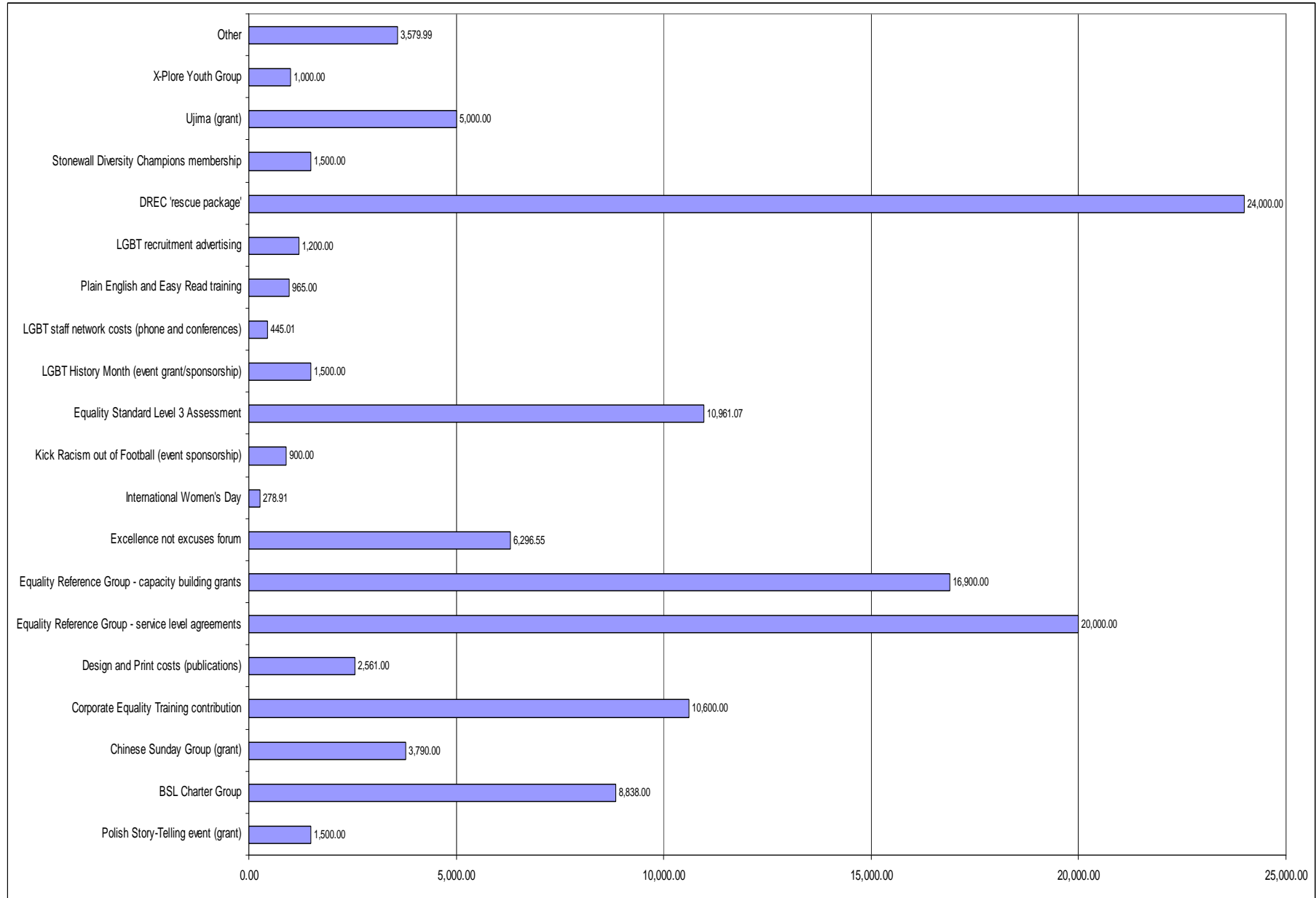
STRAND	TYPE	PROJECT	DETAIL	£
AGE	CONSULTANCY/SCRUTINY	EQUALITY REFERENCE GROUP	SENIOR COUNCIL SLA	4,000.00
CROSS	TRAINING/DEVELOPMENT	CORPORATE EQUALITY TRAINING	CONTRIBUTION TO TRAINING COSTS*	10,600.00
CROSS	GUIDANCE/INFORMATION	DESIGN AND PRINT COSTS	FAIR FOR ALL ANNUAL REPORT	159.00
CROSS	GUIDANCE/INFORMATION	DESIGN AND PRINT COSTS	CHALLENGING INEQUALITY STRAPLINE	51.00
CROSS	GUIDANCE/INFORMATION	DESIGN AND PRINT COSTS	FAIR FOR ALL PROGRAMME	593.00
CROSS	GUIDANCE/INFORMATION	DESIGN AND PRINT COSTS	EINA TOOLKIT	1,758.00
CROSS	CONSULTANCY/SCRUTINY	LEVEL 3 EQUALITY STANDARD ASSESSMENT	MOCK ASSESSMENT CONSULTANCY FEES	2,254.30
CROSS	CONSULTANCY/SCRUTINY	LEVEL 3 EQUALITY STANDARD ASSESSMENT	PEER CHALLENGE ASSESSMENT FEES	2,950.00
CROSS	GUIDANCE/INFORMATION	LEVEL 3 EQUALITY STANDARD ASSESSMENT	DESIGN AND PRINT COSTS	5,205.00
CROSS	OTHER	LEVEL 3 EQUALITY STANDARD ASSESSMENT	VENUE AND CATERING COSTS	117.15
CROSS	OTHER	LEVEL 3 EQUALITY STANDARD ASSESSMENT	BSL INTERPRETER FOR FOCUS GROUP	72.00
CROSS	OTHER	LEVEL 3 EQUALITY STANDARD ASSESSMENT	SUBSCRIPTION FOR ESAT SYSTEM	343.75
CROSS	OTHER	LEVEL 3 EQUALITY STANDARD ASSESSMENT	DATA STICKS FOR CHALLENGE TEAM	18.87
CROSS	TRAINING/DEVELOPMENT	PLAIN ENGLISH AND EASY READ	TRAINING - KEY STAFF	965.00
CROSS	OTHER	UNSPECIFIED**	MEETING OR TRAINING VENUE COSTS (UNSPECIFIED)	3,471.24
DISABILITY	CAMPAIGNS/PROJECTS	BSL CHARTER GROUP	INTERPRETING COSTS	144.00
DISABILITY	CAMPAIGNS/PROJECTS	BSL CHARTER GROUP	ASLI CONSULTANCY	338.00
DISABILITY	CAMPAIGNS/PROJECTS	BSL CHARTER GROUP	PRINTING BSL CHARTER BOOKLETS	244.00
DISABILITY	CAMPAIGNS/PROJECTS	BSL CHARTER GROUP	PRINTING SIGN VISION REPORTS	374.00
DISABILITY	CAMPAIGNS/PROJECTS	BSL CHARTER GROUP	DEAF PROJECT FUNDING (SLA)	3,000.00
DISABILITY	CAMPAIGNS/PROJECTS	BSL CHARTER GROUP	SIGN VISION REPORT BSL DVD COSTS	4,738.00
DISABILITY	OTHER	CUSTOMER	BRAILLE TRANSCRIPTION	20.00
DISABILITY	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	EQUALITY REFERENCE GROUP	LIVING OPTIONS C.B. GRANT	3,000.00
DISABILITY	CONSULTANCY/SCRUTINY	EQUALITY REFERENCE GROUP	LIVING OPTIONS DEVON SLA	4,000.00

DISABILITY	CAMPAIGNS/PROJECTS	HEARING DOGS FUNDRAISING EVENT 16th Oct	PHOTOGRAPHER FEES	38.75
FAITH	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	EQUALITY REFERENCE GROUP	DEVON FAITHS FORUM C.B. GRANT	3,000.00
GENDER	CONSULTANCY/SCRUTINY	EQUALITY REFERENCE GROUP	FAWCETT SOCIETY SW SLA	4,000.00
GENDER	COMMUNITY EVENTS	INTERNATIONAL WOMENS DAY	CATERING/VENUE COSTS	269.81
GENDER	COMMUNITY EVENTS	INTERNATIONAL WOMENS DAY	KEYNOTE SPEAKER EXPENSES	9.10
LGBT	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	EQUALITY REFERENCE GROUP	INTERCOM C.B. GRANT	4,000.00
LGBT	CONSULTANCY/SCRUTINY	EQUALITY REFERENCE GROUP	INTERCOM TRUST SLA	4,000.00
LGBT	COMMUNITY EVENTS	LGBT HISTORY MONTH	GRANT	1,500.00
LGBT	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	LGBT STAFF NETWORK	MISL. COSTS INCL. MOBILE PHONE*	445.01
LGBT	RECRUITMENT/EMPLOYMENT	RECRUITMENT ADVERTISING FOR POSITIVE ACTION	FYNE TIMES	1,200.00
LGBT	OTHER	STONEWALL DIVERSITY CHAMPIONS	MEMBERSHIP	1,500.00
LGBT	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	X-PLORE LGBT YOUTH GROUP	GRANT	1,000.00
RACE	COMMUNITY EVENTS	APO POLISH FAIRY TALES STORYTELLING EVENT	GRANT	1,500.00
RACE	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	CHINESE COMMUNITY - SUNDAY GROUP	GRANT	3,790.00
RACE	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	EQUALITY REFERENCE GROUP	DREC C.B. GRANT	6,900.00
RACE	CONSULTANCY/SCRUTINY	EQUALITY REFERENCE GROUP	DREC SLA	4,000.00
RACE	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	EXCELLENCE NOT EXCUSES FORUM	VENUE AND CATERING COSTS	727.45
RACE	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	EXCELLENCE NOT EXCUSES FORUM	CHAIR/CO-ORDINATOR COSTS	4,500.00
RACE	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	EXCELLENCE NOT EXCUSES FORUM	COMMUNITY REP 1. EXPENSES	513.60

RACE	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	EXCELLENCE NOT EXCUSES FORUM	COMMUNITY REP 2. EXPENSES	368.00
RACE	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	EXCELLENCE NOT EXCUSES FORUM	COMMUNITY REP 3. EXPENSES	187.50
RACE	OTHER	GLOBAL CENTRE	MEMBERSHIP	50.00
RACE	COMMUNITY EVENTS	KICK RACISM OUT OF FOOTBALL	EVENT SPONSORSHIP	900.00
RACE	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	RESCUE PACKAGE	DREC	24,000.00
RACE	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	UJIMA (EXETER COMMUNITY INITIATIVES)	GRANT	5,000.00
			<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>121,815.53</b>

#### ABBREVIATIONS

DREC	Devon Racial Equality Council
SLA	Service Level Agreement
EINA	Equality Impact and Needs Assessment
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender
ASLI	Association of Sign Language Interpreters
APO	Anglo Polish Association
ESAT	Database for collecting evidence
BSL	British Sign Language
C.B.	Capacity Building
*	Venue costs may be counted under 'unspecified'
**	Includes Equality Surgeries, EINA Facilitator and Equality Strategy Group meetings



## **Monitoring Information**

### **Staff diversity profiles:**

[http://www.devon.gov.uk/staff\\_profile](http://www.devon.gov.uk/staff_profile)

### **Community profile:**

<http://www.devon.gov.uk/equalityanddiversity>

### **National Indicators/Performance Data:**

In due course Devon will publish its own data. Data can be interrogated from the following national website:

<http://www.fti.communities.gov.uk/fti/>

A graphic consisting of two overlapping, stylized leaves. The top leaf is light blue and the bottom leaf is light green. They are positioned on the left side of the page, with the green leaf partially overlapping the blue one.

[www.devon.gov.uk/diversity](http://www.devon.gov.uk/diversity)

CHALLENGING INEQUALITY  
& CELEBRATING DIVERSITY